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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3242
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RUEH AR/AMEMBASSY ACCRA 2190
RUEH DS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA 2309
RUEH RL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 0841
RUEH BY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1586
RUEH DK/AMEMBASSY DAKAR 1944
RUEH KM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA 2365
RUEH NR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 4796
RUEA IIA/CIA WASHDC
RUZEJAA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK
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RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1455
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 HARARE 000652

SIPDIS

AF/S FOR G. GARLAND
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU
ADDIS ABABA FOR ACSS
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR E. LOKEN AND L. DOBBINS
STATE PASS TO NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR B. PITTMAN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/01/2018
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [ZI](#)
SUBJECT: VIOLENCE CONTINUES IN AREAS; ACCESS TO MEDICAL
CARE DENIED

REF: HARARE 606

Classified By: Ambassador James D. McGee for reason 1.4(d).

SUMMARY

¶1. (C) While the prevalence of violence in Zimbabwe has fallen since the June 27 one-man runoff election, violence against MDC members and leaders continues, particularly in some rural areas, and victims continue to experience significant and growing delays accessing medical treatment. Because of this delay - an average of 19 days in July for victims living outside Harare - and the ongoing ban on NGOs' field activities, it is difficult to assess the real-time occurrence of violence. An independent NGO, Counseling Services Unit (CSU), has confirmed 154 deaths since the March 29 election. The Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) believes hundreds more have died but are not included in these confirmed numbers because local authorities have not been allowed to conduct autopsies or write the true cause of death on death certificates. In recent weeks, press reports of rape have grabbed headlines and there are verified cases, including gang rape by soldiers, but Zimbabweans who track violence believe rape has not been widespread and systematic. While a cessation of violence was one of the MDC's pre-conditions for talks between the MDC and ZANU-PF, we believe violence, albeit at a reduced level, is ongoing. This may be in part because of absence of effective central government control in rural areas. END SUMMARY.

Ongoing violence violates MOU

¶2. (U) On July 21, Robert Mugabe of ZANU-PF and the leaders of both MDC factions, Morgan Tsvangirai and Arthur Mutambara, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) laying out guidelines for talks to resolve the ongoing political crisis in Zimbabwe. In the MOU, "security of persons and prevention of

violence" is one of the main topics. In addition, they agreed that, as an interim measure, "(a) Each Party will issue a statement condemning the promotion and use of violence and call for peace in the country and shall take all measures necessary to ensure that the structures and institutions it controls are not engaged in the perpetration of violence. (b) The Parties are committed to ensuring that the law is fairly and justly applied to all persons irrespective of political affiliation. (c) The parties will take all necessary measures to eliminate all forms of political violence, including by non-state actors, and to ensure the security of persons and property. (d) The Parties agree that, in the interim, they will work together to ensure the safety of any displaced persons and their safe return home and that humanitarian and social welfare organizations are enabled to render such assistance as might be required."

Violence reduced, but still above pre-election levels

13. (SBU) CSU is a local NGO that treats victims and tracks statistics according to strict verification criteria. Before the March 29 elections, CSU medical staff saw an average of 60 violence victims per week. At the peak of violence in May and June, they saw 100 per day. Since June 27, they continue to see about 60 per day -- thirty times the number before the elections. As of July 19, they had treated 675 new cases in July, but only 54 were actually injured in July. In June, the severity of injury decreased from May. However, in July

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the prevalence of severe and life threatening cases rose -- possibly because of the increased delay in accessing medical care. In June, for injuries occurring outside Harare, the average delay was 14 days; the delay grew to 19 days in July. (NOTE: A delay for victims who are beaten on the buttocks, a common occurrence, is significant; the wounds often close and become infected. If the infection spreads, it can lead to serious kidney damage. END NOTE.)

14. (C) CSU reported a total of 154 deaths between March 29 and July 19, and MDC data claims a confirmed total of 162 deaths between March 29 and July 29. They report that while 31 have died since the June 27 election, most of these were from injuries inflicted before June 27. In some areas, hospital officials have reportedly been threatened if they report the true cause of death on the death certificate. Because these deaths and their cause cannot be confirmed, they are not included in statistics published by either CSU or MDC. (NOTE: CSU's and MDC's confirmed numbers differ because CSU's standards of confirmation are more stringent than those of the MDC. CSU requires first-hand medical verification. END NOTE.) Additionally, MDC Welfare Secretary Kerry Kay, in a briefing with diplomats on July 22, said police had told the MDC that at least 350-400 had been killed during this approximate time period, but they were buried quickly and without witnesses.

15. (SBU) MDC also reported on July 29 that at least five women had been raped since June 27, including one who was raped 18 different times. Some rapes have occurred at militia bases by both youth militia and Zimbabwean military. CSU has treated some, but very few, rape victims. (NOTE: Rape is a highly sensitive subject culturally, and is severely under-reported. END NOTE.) While some of these incidents have received extensive coverage, Zimbabweans who track violence have told us that rape is neither systematic nor widespread.

Paying goats to atone for political sins

16. (C) While violence appears to have subsided there are still pockets of ongoing violence directed at the MDC. In

her July 22 briefing, Kay reported that MDC believed 55 ZANU-PF bases were still operational in Manicaland and Masvingo provinces. These bases are being used by military officials and/or ZANU-PF youths to interrogate and punish returning MDC supporters. In some villages, victims have been forced to pay fines in cash or livestock before they are allowed to return home. One civil society leader's parents were forced to give one of their best cows to ZANU-PF militias who said their son was "causing a lot of trouble."

17. (SBU) Buhera in Manicaland province and Gokwe in Midlands province continue to be two of the "hottest" areas in Zimbabwe for violence and are "no go" areas for the MDC. Several villages in Buhera and Gokwe have reportedly held ZANU-PF "celebration" rallies where MDC supporters have been beaten and subsequently denied access to medical care. Two MDC activists were reportedly abducted at gunpoint in Buhera on July 24 by Colonel Morgan Muzilikazi. The activists were attempting to transport 17 victims - who had been beaten by ZANU-PF thugs on July 17 - to Mutare for medical attention. The vehicle was taken by force and the 17 injured people are still in Buhera and have not received medical attention. In Gokwe, at least a dozen MDC members were beaten and then denied treatment at the local hospital. MDC spent days organizing vehicles to retrieve the victims and bring them to Harare for attention.

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18. (SBU) On Saturday, July 19, two days before the MOU was signed, ZANU-PF militia seriously beat two MDC youths with sticks at Chikoko militia base in Mudzi in Mashonaland East province. The youths were held overnight, beaten again and then released. The youths were only able to receive treatment in Harare on July 29. Also in Mudzi, a policeman, Kingsley Muteta, was beaten by twelve ZANU-PF youths on July 17; he died in Harare on July 27 from his injuries. Muteta was in Mudzi to visit his mother. He confronted the militia after learning that she had been beaten while attending his MDC-affiliated brother-in-law's funeral. His brother-in-law had died from injuries sustained by the militia.

COMMENT

19. (C) The ongoing violence could be seen as demonstrating that Mugabe and ZANU-PF are deliberately continuing the campaign of violence and intimidation in rural areas, that they cannot control the violence in rural areas, or, most likely, a combination of both. With cessation of violence an agreed-upon condition for ZANU-PF-MDC negotiations continuation of talks, it is unclear how much the MDC will be willing to tolerate. We will continue to monitor and gather information on violence. However, with little international presence in rural areas, and the significant delays accessing medical care, it is difficult to know what is happening in real time across the country. END COMMENT.

MCGEE